

# Westminster United Church

## Order of Worship

January 13, 2019



## The Baptism of Jesus

## Gathering Music

## Welcome and Announcements

(★ invites people to stand as they are able;  
people's part in bold type)

## Entry Into Celebration

(E.A. Hewitt, adapted)

Today we celebrate the baptism of Jesus.  
So, as you settle into this sacred time and place,  
put away the pressures of the world  
that ask you to perform, to wear phony masks,  
and to put on false fronts.  
Silence the voices that ask you to be perfect.  
This is an inclusive community –  
a community of welcoming and compassion.

**We bring all that we are,  
and all that we yet can be,  
to this safe and sacred time and place...**

*The singing bowl is sounded three times*

## Opening Reflections

(Gordon B. McKeenan & Sara M. Campbell, adapted)

We are called into this time of worship and  
celebration, not just by words spoken,  
but also by miracles recalled:

**A baby's first cry, the petals of a rose,  
mist-covered hills, the restless tides  
of the seas, human love, human hope.**

We respond

**With gratitude, with joy, with wonder,  
at life's possibilities.**

During this time of worship and celebration  
may we receive fragments of holiness,  
glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight.

**Let us gather them up for the precious gifts  
they are, and renewed by their grace, move  
boldly into the unknown.**

May it be so. Amen.

## ★Opening Hymn VU 100

*"When Jesus Comes to Be Baptized"*

## A Conversation

Some Surprising and Puzzling Things  
About Jesus' Baptism

## ★Hymn VU 375 "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness"

## A Litany: **We Come Together** (C. Meyer, adapted)

We are people of all ages who enter this space,  
bringing our joys and our concerns.

**We come together in hope.**

We greet each other warmly  
with our voices and our smiles.

**We come together in peace.**

We share our growth and aspirations.

**We come together in wonder.**

We share our losses and disappointments.

**We come together in sorrow.**

We share our concern and compassion.

**We come together in love.**

We sing and pray and listen.

We speak and read and dream.

We think and ponder and reflect.

We cry and laugh and centre.

We mourn and celebrate and meditate.

We strive for justice and mercy.

**We come together to celebrate life – all of life!  
– in the presence of God.**

### Sharing the Peace

May a heart of peace rest with you.

**And also with you.**

**Choral Response VU 381**    “ *Spirit of Life* ”

### Readings

From the Old Testament    *Isaiah 43: 1-7*

From the Gospels    *Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22*

From the Book of Acts    *Acts 8: 14-17*

From the ‘New Testament’    “ *Ordinary Graces* ”  
(a poem by Joy Atkinson in For All That Is Our Life, pp 2-3)

### Reflections on This Morning’s Readings

Let us recognize the seeds of truth and wisdom  
in these readings.

**And may these seeds of truth and wisdom  
be planted in the fertile soil  
of our hearts and minds...**

### Centering

Let us now settle into silence and stillness...

*Silence*

Let us centre our minds and our hearts.

We are one with the universe.

We are one with the sun and the stars.

We are one with the earth.

We are one with the One who is mystery...

*Silence*

Amen.

**Sermon** “ *Baptism: A Subversive Act* ” Rev Del Stewart

### Pastoral Prayers (Responsive)

Today we have celebrated God anointing Jesus  
with the Holy Spirit at his baptism,  
and revealing him as a Beloved Son.

**May we who are baptized into his name  
be worthy of our calling,  
and give our lives to loving service.**

And now let us take a few quiet, prayerful moments  
to recall the joys and concerns we have carried here  
this morning...

*Quiet Time*

All these things, and even more,  
we pray in the name of Jesus...

**The Lord’s Prayer** (Unison)

**Presentation of Our Gifts and Offerings**

★**Offertory Hymn VU 537**

*“ Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands ”*

**Offertory Prayer**

★**Closing Hymn VU 368** *“ Holy Spirit, Truth Divine ”*

**Parting Words**

*(Henry Rack, adapted)*

The time has come for us to leave this place.  
As you depart, embrace the wonder of this week  
with expectation and imagination.  
And may God, the Giver of All Good Things,  
bless you with  
The understanding of friends,  
The lessons of experience,  
The questioning of seekers,  
The wisdom of thinkers, and  
The service of helpers, now and always...

*The singing bowl is sounded three times.*

**Words of Blessing** (Min)

May the Brotherly grace of the Christ One,  
the Fatherly love of Creativity-God,  
and the Sisterly encouragement of the  
Empowering Spirit be with you,  
here and everywhere....

**Choral Response VU 298**

*“ When You Walk from Here ”*